



NEWSLETTER

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF THE MILITARY



GROUNDBREAKING FOR NEW STATE VETERANS CEMETERY

Groundbreaking Ceremony for
South Dakota State Veterans Cemetery
Monday, September 9, at 9:00 am (CT)



Directions —

If traveling on I-229 North: Take I-229 North until it ends and turns into Jim Zweep Highway. Approximately a quarter mile north turn right onto Slip Up Creek Road. Follow Slip Up Creek Road until you see the entrance to the cemetery land.

If you're traveling on I-90: Whether traveling East or West on I-90 take the Cliff Avenue Exit (Exit 399) and head North. Travel North approximately three miles to 258th Street. Turn Right heading East on 258th St. Approximately two miles East turn right on to 477th Ave heading South. Travel South approximately one-and-a-half miles and the cemetery property will be on your right.

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MESSAGE FROM SECRETARY WHITLOCK

With the passage of the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019, Blue Water Navy Veterans are now entitled to a presumption of service connection for conditions related to Agent Orange exposure.

Veterans aboard a vessel operating not more than 12 nautical miles seaward from the demarcation line of the waters of Vietnam and Cambodia between January 9, 1962, and May 7, 1975, are presumed to have been exposed to herbicides such as Agent Orange and may be entitled to service connection for conditions related to that exposure.

Some items to note:

- The law takes effect January 1, 2020.
- Veterans can file claims at any time, and they will be decided after the law is implemented.
- Blue Water Navy claims and appeals currently in process have been placed on hold (stayed) until the new rules go into effect.
- If veterans had an Agent Orange claim with one or more presumptive conditions denied in the past, they are urged to file a new claim. Claims that are currently in the VA review process or under appeal will be reviewed under the new policy.
- Eligible survivors of deceased Blue Water Navy Veterans also may benefit from this new law and may file claims for benefits based on the veterans' service.
- Veterans should provide the name(s) of the ship(s) and the date(s) they crossed within 12 nautical miles of the Republic of Vietnam.
- Veterans should provide medical evidence showing a diagnosis of a current Agent Orange presumptive condition.

I encourage all veterans, and their families, to visit their respective county or tribal veterans service officer. We have posted a link on our website to assist you in locating the VSO located nearest you: <https://vetaffairs.sd.gov/veteransserviceofficers/locatevso.aspx>.

As always, our staff in our Sioux Falls Claims Office stands ready to assist veterans with their claims. Our office is located on the Sioux Falls VA Healthcare System campus – Building 38 (right off 22nd Street) or give us a call at 605.333.6869.



**The Blue Water Navy
Vietnam Veterans Act**



SIGNED INTO LAW

RECOGNIZING KOREAN WAR VETERANS

A big **SHOUT OUT** to Union County Veterans Service Officer Susan Iron for her continued quest to honor all of our Korean War Veterans.

Susan was part of a great ceremony to honor Darrell Brown and to present him with the Korean Ambassador Peace Medal. This picture demonstrates how proud families are of their heroes and how they want to hear their stories of their service to this great country.



SDDVA has a limited supply of the Korean Ambassador Peace Medals available for county and tribal veterans service officers

WEARING THE RED WHILE ON THE SPYDER

SDDVA's Sheila Shaffer recently participated in a Spyder Ride in the Hills. Shaffer urged riders on Friday to support our troops that are deployed and encouraged them to wear **RED** shirts (Remembering Everyone Deployed).



Shaffer has promoted the **RED** shirts with many of our state agencies and has been instrumental in assisting them in placing group orders for the shirts.

If you are in Pierre on Fridays, you will also find Governor Leslie Jensen, donned in **RED** thanks to Sheila and Jeri Smith and their continued support of our troops!



SD GUARD OFFICER CANDIDATE SCHOOL AWARDS FIRST INSTRUCTOR BADGE

The South Dakota Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 196th Regiment (Regional Training Institute) awarded its first Basic Army Instructor Badge to Sgt. 1st Class Chad Hartley at Fort Meade, June 26.

The purpose of the BAIB is to provide recognition to certified Army instructors who meet and exceed standards and requisites established in Army Training and Doctrine, or TRADOC, regulation.

The badge was awarded by 1-196th leadership during its accelerated Officer Candidate School program, which takes place at Fort Meade every summer.

"I'm very passionate about teaching and developing future officers," said Hartley, OCS instructor and a Spearfish native. "This is a tremendous honor to receive the badge, but the real reward for me is seeing officer candidates rise to the challenge, and grow and gain confidence in themselves."

Hartley has been teaching courses at OCS since 2015. He plans to wear the badge proudly and hopes to promote and inspire other noncommissioned officers, as well as officers, to come to the RTI and teach future leaders.

In order to receive the BAIB, instructors must meet a checklist of TRADOC requirements, but most importantly they must successfully teach at least 80 hours of instruction as a primary instructor and be evaluated twice against the Instructor Observation Rubric.

"With the changes in the classroom environment, developing and retaining dynamic Army instructors is essential," said Lt. Col. Troy Ness, 1-196th commander. "The badge program helps bring credit and validation to the new Army learning concept and promotes instructors to become better."

In recent years, Army learning has changed from the instructor-lead, didactic training model to one that is more peer-to-peer learning - Army instructors must promote facilitation, critical thinking and problem solving, rather than lecturing and giving students information to memorize. This learning environment requires a more adept instructor.

Instructors can also work toward the Senior Army Instructor Badge and the Master Army Instructor Badge (the top badge).

To maintain qualification for this voluntary program, the instructor must continue to meet all requirements of the badge previously awarded, including physical fitness and the Army height and weight standards. They must also attend various facilitation and instructor development courses, and again be evaluated twice per badge.



SECRETARY WHITLOCK GREETSS USS SD BIKERS

SDDVA Secretary Whitlock joined up with the ten Navy sailors participating in the USS SD Ride Across South Dakota Monday morning in Pierre. Secretary Whitlock presented them with a Governor's coin and thanked them for their service to this great country.

The sailors are taking turns riding the Commemorative USS SOUTH DAKOTA 2018 Harley-Davidson Street Glide from Sioux Falls to Sturgis. The bike will be on display in the Sturgis Motorcycle Museum.

Any sailor assigned to SSN 790 is allowed to check the bike out and ride it anywhere in South Dakota.

J&L Harley-Davidson of Sioux Falls is the sponsoring dealership and along with Black Hills Harley-Davidson will ensure the bike is maintained over the next 30 years.



PURPLE HEART RECIPIENT DINNER

The Webster American Legion will be hosting a "Purple Heart Recipient Dinner." The event will be held at the Webster American Legion on Wednesday, August 7, at 6:00 pm (CT).

Their hope is that this dinner will bring local Purple Heart recipients together to celebrate their shared military experience and start a local Purple Heart charter in Webster.

Questions regarding the event should be directed to Connie Johnson at 605-688-5319 or 605-651-3629 or email her at: connie.johnson@sddva.edu.



Purple Heart Recipient Dinner

If you have been awarded the Purple Heart, think you might qualify for a Purple Heart, support or want to know more about the Purple Heart, this dinner is for YOU! We respectfully invite you to attend the informational dinner at the

Webster American Legion on August 7th at 6:00pm.

We will be honoring local Purple Heart recipients, will share information regarding local resources and discuss intentions of starting a local Purple Heart Charter in the Webster area. Meal will be provided, free will donation accepted.

Questions? Please contact Connie Johnson

Connie Johnson
Army Veteran/Purple Heart
Recipient



Phone: 605-651-3629
E-mail: connie.johnson@sddva.edu

1-147TH FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION CHANGES COMMAND



The South Dakota Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 147th Field Artillery changed commanders during a ceremony in Watertown, July 13.

Lt. Col. Steve Siemonsma, of Summerset, took command of the unit from Lt. Col. Phillip Stiles, of Rapid City.

"I'm extremely excited to be taking command of one of two MLRS (Multiple Launch Rocket System) battalions in the Army National Guard," said Siemonsma. "It is an honor and privilege to be able to follow behind a lot of great leaders, and I look forward to the challenge of living up to the high standards they have left behind."

The 1-147th FA provides mission command and supervision for three units with approximately 400 soldiers in three communities throughout South Dakota. They assist assigned units in meeting training, administrative and logistical requirements to maintain unit readiness in support of their state and federal missions.

"I've spent a majority of my career in the field artillery, and I am excited to be going back to work with such a great group of soldiers," said Siemonsma. "We currently have a battery, plus portions of the 147th Forward Support Company, deployed to Europe and another ready to go out the door this fall. I have the distinct honor and privilege of being part of a great field artillery legacy."

Siemonsma began his SDNG career in December of 1995 when he enlisted in Service Battery, 1-147th FA. By September 1998, he received his commission as a second lieutenant and was assigned as a platoon leader in Charlie Battery, 1-147th FA.

Siemonsma has held a variety of staff and command positions throughout his career within Joint Force Headquarters, 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 147th FA, and Recruiting and Retention Battalion.

He served as a commander with Bravo Battery, 2-147th FA and the Recruiting and Retention Battalion.

Siemonsma was mobilized in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom with the 2-147th Field Artillery Battalion from December 2003 until February 2005, where he served as commander of Bravo Battery.

Siemonsma also works fulltime for the SDARNG as the state training officer with Joint Force Headquarters in Rapid City.



MIDWEST HONOR FLIGHT

MISSION 5

Midwest Honor Flight Mission 5 has become a reality and on September 24 over 80 veterans will be traveling through our nation's capital - Washington, D.C

Smithfield Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Smithfield Foods, has donated \$125,000 to Midwest Honor Flight to cover the costs of Mission 5.

Mission 5 will leave Sioux Falls Regional Airport on Tuesday, September 24, at 4:45 am (CT) and fly to Washington D.C. The tour will consist of a visit to The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier to witness the Changing of the Guard located in Arlington National Cemetery, Iwo Jima, Air Force and Navy Memorials and conclude with stops at the World War II, Korean War, and Vietnam War Memorials.

On Tuesday evening a "welcome home ceremony" will be held for the veterans on Mission 5. The ceremony will be held at the Sioux Falls Convention Center Arena at 8:45 pm (CT). Doors will open at 7:15 pm (CT).



Midwest Honor Flight is a non-profit, 100% volunteer organization in Northwest Iowa, South Dakota, and Southwest Minnesota dedicated to providing veterans with honor, respect, and closure with an all-expense-paid trip to our nation's capital.

To find out more about Midwest Honor Flight, or to find out how to apply, donate or serve as a guardian visit: <https://www.midwesthonorflight.org/>

Join us for an Educational Event with Susannah Cahalan

Acclaimed Journalist & New York Times Bestselling Author of
Brain On Fire: My Month of Madness

Her award-winning work has appeared in the New York Times, Psychology Today, Scientific American, BBC's Focus magazine, and Elle.

In *Brain on Fire: My Month of Madness* Cahalan recounts the one day that she woke up in a strange hospital room, strapped to a bed, under guard, and unable to move or speak. Her medical records – from a month-long hospital stay of which she has no memory – showed psychosis, violence, and dangerous instability. Yet, only weeks earlier Cahalan had been a healthy twenty-four year old, six months into her first serious relationship and beginning a career as a cub reporter at the New York Post.

Brain on Fire: My Month of Madness has also been made into a Netflix Original movie.

August 21, 2019
11 AM to 12:15 PM
Washington Pavillion
Mary W. Sommervold Hall

This event is open to the public so it will be first come, first seated.

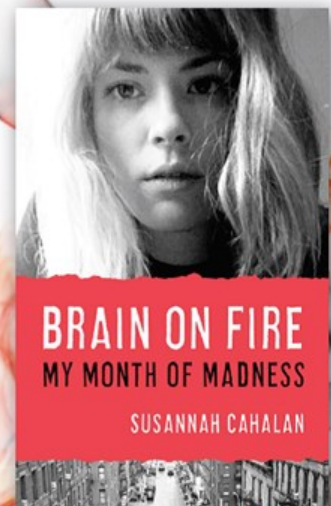
CME credit will be offered.

Sponsored by Avera and the University of South Dakota Sanford School of Medicine Department of Psychiatry and Graduate Medical Education



UNIVERSITY OF
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SANFORD SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Avera 



Jul 19-21—"Last Out" Performance—Thomas H. Craig Center for the Performing Arts—Vermillion High School—
Show times 8:00 pm (CT) on 19-20 and 2:00 pm (CT) on 21st

Jul 20—PVA 5th Annual Poker Run—Thirsty Duck Bar and Grill (945 S. Marion Road)—Sioux Falls—10:00 am (CT)

Jul 20—SD American Legion Auxiliary State President Homecoming—United Methodist Church—Dell Rapids—2:00 pm (CT)

Jul 20-24—National VFW Convention—Orlando, FL

Jul 20—SFVAHCS Whole Health Class—Sioux Falls Vet Center (3200 W. 49th Street)—9:00 am—11:00 am (CT)

Jul 27—SDNG Deployment Ceremony for the 152nd Combat Sustainment—Riggs High School—Pierre—2:00 pm (CT)

Jul 29—All Nations Veterans Cemetery Dedication—McLaughlin (10191 Highway 6)—10:00 am (CT)

Aug 2—American Legion Highway 281 Centennial Run (ND/SD Border to SD/NE Border)

Aug 2—CRST Dedication of Veterans Memorial Park—Eagle Butte (E. HWY 212)—3:00 pm (CT)

Aug 3-6—DAV National Convention—Orlando, FL

Aug 14—Turner County Fair Vietnam Veterans Recognition—3:00—5:00 pm (CT)

Aug 14—SFVAHCS Show and Shine—SFVAHCS Campus—5:30—8:30 pm (CT)

Aug 17—SFVAHCS Whole Health Class—Sioux Falls Vet Center (3200 W. 49th Street)—9:00 am—11:00 am (CT)

Aug 17-18—Sioux Falls Air Show

Aug 24—Wine and Gala Auction (Midwest Honor Flight Benefit)—Calico Skies Winery

Aug 26—Sioux Falls Barrel House (Midwest Honor Flight Benefit—10% all day to MWHF)—4701 E 54th Street

Aug 29—Veterans Day at the Fair

Aug 26-29—SDDVA Benefit School

Aug 31—15th Annual 727th Transportation/DAV Poker Run—Swiftel Center—Brookings

Sep 9—SD State Veterans Cemetery Groundbreaking—9:00 am (CT)

Sep 21—SFVAHCS Whole Health Class—Sioux Falls Vet Center (3200 W. 49th Street)—9:00 am—11:00 am (CT)

Sep 21—Davison County Veterans Wellness and Benefit Fair—Mitchell Corn Palace—8:00 am—4:30 pm (CT)

Sep 21-22—SD American Legion Golf Tournament—Hartford Golf Course

Sep 24—Midwest Honor Flight Mission 5 Welcome Home Ceremony—Sioux Falls Convention Center Arena—8:45 pm (CT) - doors open at 7:15

Nov 2—Second Annual Hangar Dance (Midwest Honor Flight Benefit)—Mid America Museum of Aviation—
Sioux City, IA—7:00 pm (CT)



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